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INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 1032
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0082
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002469

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DOD FOR IG KICKLIGHTER, STATE/OIG FOR IG Krongard

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/01/2017

TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER MOPS KCRM IZ AF TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: DEFENSE AND STATE INSPECTORS GENERAL
BRIEF TURKISH OFFICIALS ON EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN CONTROLS
OVER U.S. WEAPONS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. ANKARA 1866

1B. ANKARA 2247

1C. ANKARA 2437

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: During their September 28 visit to Ankara, DOD IG Kicklighter and DOS IG Krongard outlined for senior Turkish officials their mission to establish more effective controls and accountability for U.S. arms being provided to the security forces of Iraq and Afghanistan. They underscored that their direct, personal involvement in this process reflects the seriousness with which the USG takes Turkish concerns about U.S. weapons ending up in the hands of PKK terrorists and criminal elements. While expressing appreciation for their visit, Turkish officials reiterated complaints that the U.S. has been slow to address the issue, and stressed U.S. weapons continue to be found on PKK operatives. They urged the Inspectors General to take concrete action to end this phenomenon. Kicklighter offered to provide periodic updates on USG investigations on weapons that ended up in Turkey, and to look into the allegation of refurbished German arms shipped to Iraq by a Polish firm that had ended up in the hands of the PKK. End Summary.

12. (C) In response to ongoing GOT complaints about U.S.-purchased weapons ending up in the hands of terrorist and criminal elements (refs a and b), U.S. Department of Defense Inspector General LTG (ret) Claude Kicklighter and DOS Inspector General Howard Krongard met on September 28 with senior Turkish MFA, General Staff, and national police officials to explain their effort to establish more effective controls over the weapons that the USG is providing to the

security forces of Iraq and Afghanistan. The Inspectors General noted that their joint mission indicated the seriousness with which the U.S. is taking the issue, and stressed that their mandate came directly from the Secretaries of State and Defense, as well as the Chairman of

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the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and has the support of Generals Petraeus and Dubik in Iraq. Inspector General Kicklighter stressed that his goal is not just to write a report. He said he plans to make sure that the procedures recommended following his investigations are implemented. Those who break the law will continue to be investigated.

¶3. (C) Turkish General Staff Intelligence Chief (J2) Lieutenant General Ismail Hakki Pekin stressed to the Inspectors General that the use of US-purchased weapons by terrorists and criminals has taken on a political dimension. &It is impossible to explain to our people why Turkish soldiers are being killed by terrorists using the weapons of our allies.⁸ While welcoming the inspectors general's efforts, LTG Pekin urged quick action to place firm controls on US weapons being distributed to the government of Iraq.

¶4. (C) In a separate meeting, Turkish National Police Chief of Smuggling and Organized Crime Department Ahmet Pek complained of the slow response by the USG to Turkish concerns. &This is not a new issue,⁸ Pek stressed, &We've been telling you about this problem since 2003. Yet, to this day, we are continuing to find US weapons in the hands of terrorists and criminals.⁸ Pek provided the inspectors general numerous photographs of US-purchased weapons seized during recent police operations. Criticizing USG failures to respond to information that the TNP had

provided on specific cases, Pek asked rhetorically whether there are communication problems within the USG in coordinating these investigations. Kicklighter stated that the Defense Criminal Investigation Service (DCIS) in his office is leading investigations into these cases, and pledged to resolve any communication barriers that may exist among various USG agencies. He offered to look into the issue and provide the TNP with an update, but reminded Pek that U.S. information that can be shared about ongoing investigations is often severely limited. Pek also made reference to the publicity surrounding Blackwater and, particularly, allegations that some Blackwater employees had engaged in weapons smuggling. He wanted to know if that investigation was continuing and whether Blackwater weapons could be finding their way to PKK. Mr. Krongard indicated that his office was involved in that investigation and he was alert to that possibility.

¶5. (C) Pek drew attention to recent cases involving German guns refurbished by a Polish firm called &Bomar.⁸ According to TNP information, thousands of weapons of this type were shipped to Iraq by Poland. A number of these weapons have been found recently during Turkish police operations, and Pek asked the delegation what is being done to address the shipment of weapons from third countries to Iraq. While offering to obtain information related to these weapons, Kicklighter explained that part of USG goals is to help ensure that Iraqi security forces, both military and police, apply good controls over the weapons in their inventory, irrespective of their origin. Kicklighter stated that the Iraqis are putting into place a system of controls, are eager to learn, and understand the importance of these procedures.

¶6. (C) During the meeting with the TNP, a Turkish National Intelligence Organization (TNIO) representative highlighted Turkish intelligence information that the PKK is stockpiling C3 and C4 explosives in a secret depot in the Kandil Mountains of Northern Iraq. Although available intelligence suggests that the PKK is not currently planning any operations with these explosives, the TNIO rep said the discovery of a van loaded with explosives in downtown Ankara

last month underscored the danger of a potential PKK operation using plastic explosives. The TNIO rep was not able to respond to Kicklighter's request for the coordinates of the depot.

¶7. (C) MFA Undersecretary Ertugrul Apakan, during a separate meeting with the Inspectors General, cited Turkey's time-tested friendship and strategic partnership with the US that permitted frank communication on this sensitive issue. He expressed deep appreciation for the visit, and welcomed senior level USG engagement.

¶8. (C) Apakan stated that 1,300 US-purchased weapons had been confiscated by authorities in Turkey and noted that MFA had provided several lists of serial numbers of these weapons to the USG. Not all of the weapons had been recovered from the PKK; some had been associated with criminals and organized crime groups. Highlighting the serious public perception dimension of the problem, he noted that several high-profile murders had been committed with US-purchased weapons, including the assassination of a priest in Trabzon and the killing of several judges.

¶9. (C) Kicklighter thanked Apakan for the important information on recovered arms provided by Turkey. He assured Apakan that Turkish concerns were being taken extremely seriously and were shared by US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. The scope of the current assessment was wide and because the team was in the process of reviewing voluminous records from national arms depots to local military units and police stations, it would take time. He pledged to work together with Turkish authorities and to share information. There was both an opportunity and a willingness to make improvements in weapons accountability in Iraq, Kicklighter emphasized.

¶10. (C) Apakan briefed the Inspectors General and Ambassador on the agreement concluded September 28 between the Turkish and Iraqi ministers of interior regarding counterterrorism (ref c), and expressed hope that this agreement will pave the way for better Turkish-Iraqi bilateral cooperation in countering the PKK.

Comment:

¶11. (C) The visit of the Inspectors General sent an important signal to the GOT that their concern over the leakage of US weapons into the hands of the PKK and other criminal elements is being taken seriously, and was a significant help. It will be important to follow-up the visit by providing the GOT with periodic updates and, to the extent possible, details and specifics with regard to ongoing investigations and actions taken to establish more effective accountability over U.S.- purchased arms.

This cable has been cleared by Inspectors General Kicklighter and Krongard.

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